



The STEWARD

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Michael F. Easley
Governor

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William G. Ross Jr.
Secretary, DENR



DENR Secretary Bill Ross speaks to river trail advocates.

HAW TRAIL GETS BOOST

A 70-mile-long river corridor – with state parks anchoring each end – that provides conservation, recreation and opportunities for ecotourism is the vision contained in a new memorandum of understanding adopted by nine local governments in central North Carolina and the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The agreement formalizes the Haw River Trail, which is already emerging as a major hiking and paddling attraction stretching across five counties.

Local and state partners celebrated the pact at a July 14 ceremony in Graham in Alamance County.

Bill Ross, secretary of DENR, told the group that its bold vision combined with a strong partnership will allow the Haw River region to design its own future to meet the needs of citizens and the environment.

“That’s the opportunity I see you all seizing in this partnership...The future is so promising,” Ross said.

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TRUST FUND GRANTS TOTAL \$17.7 MILLION

The N.C. Parks and Recreation Authority awarded nearly \$4.2 million to 14 local governments for parks and recreation projects at its July 28 meeting at Jones Lake State Park.

This is in addition to 41 grants awarded at a May meeting. The 2005-06 grant cycle represents a record \$17.7 million awarded from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

During the year, the authority considered 86 grant applications requesting more than \$27.2 million. A maximum of \$500,000 can be awarded to a single project. The matching grants will help fund land acquisition, development and renovation of public park and recreation areas.

“Obviously, we have more requests for money than we have money,” Authority Chairman Jonathan Howes told members of the board and attendees who gathered in the park’s new visitor center, which was funded through PARTF. “We have a lot of good projects

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UP CLOSE AND 'PERSONNEL'

Emily Parisher is the new environmental biologist in the central region for the division's resource management program. She is a graduate of Chapel Hill High School and earned a bachelor's degree

from UNC at Wilmington and a master's degree in 2004 in biology from Appalachian State University. She previously was a project scientist for Environmental Services Inc. of Atlanta, GA, and was an intern for the

U.S. Forest Service in Cherokee National Forest.

Jessie Summers

joined the staff of Raven Rock State Park as the office assistant. She brings more than 12 years experience as an office manager to the job including time with the N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice, the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra and the Humane Society of Charlotte. She attended Hinds Junior College in Raymond, MS, and Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte.

Tina Keller

is the new office assistant at South Mountains State Park. She is a 2002 graduate of Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute and has more than eight years of related experience including jobs with N.C. DOT in Caldwell County and Santech Computer Services of Granite Falls.

Erica Tunison

joined the staff of Jordan Lake State Recreation Area as a park ranger. She attended high school in Bettendorf, IA, and is a 2003 graduate of Western Illinois University in Macomb, IL, with a bachelor's degree in recreation, parks and tourism administration. She is a certified wilderness first responder.

Justin Leonard

is a new park ranger at Lake Norman State Park. After attending high school in Tampa, FL, Leonard earned a bachelor's degree from Montreat College in Montreat and a master's degree in environmental studies from Prescott College in Prescott, AZ. He has worked as a biologist and interpretation specialist for Wildlife Expeditions of Jackson, WY.

From The Director's Desk

Just another day at the park often isn't, as we've seen in the past few weeks. Intense emergency situations can arise almost instantly – lost hikers, missing swimmers, illness and injury – and our park superintendents and rangers are the public safety officers on the front line. Their professional conduct has earned them the respect of the public and other agencies.

But there's more at work here. An undercurrent in all the official reports is the contributions of all the park and division staff. There are the stories of office personnel, maintenance mechanics, seasonal workers and even park volunteers actively getting involved and going above and beyond.

With such an extraordinary support system, our rangers become even more effective and our state parks are safer places to work and to play.

On another note, we've made superintendent appointments at two new state parks – Adrienne Wallace at Mayo River and Sue McBean at Haw River. Both are excellent choices and their appointments mark a significant step in the development of these parks. They'll be choosing core staff, forming park advisory committees and developing new relationships with the local communities in Rockingham County.

Partnerships are ever more important to us. News this month about the Haw River Trail agreement among state agencies and local governments is testament to that. We're also pleased to further develop our partnerships with local governments through the grant program of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. Fourteen grants totaling \$4.2 million were announced in July. Also, we should all benefit from the momentum of the Land for Tomorrow Coalition of conservation organizations as we look to protect important lands in the future.

These are exciting and challenging times for our state parks system. Over the next few years, we have the opportunity to make monumental differences on behalf of this and future generations of North Carolinians. I hope you share my excitement about this tremendous opportunity.

Sincerely,



Lewis Ledford

RANGER RESPONSE VITAL IN INCIDENTS

Rangers responded with quick thinking and quick reaction to two separate, life-threatening incidents at neighboring state parks in late July.

At Hanging Rock State Park, rangers teamed to perform CPR on a 14-year-old park visitor who collapsed while attending a youth outing at the park. The juvenile has since recovered.

And at Stone Mountain State Park, more than three dozen rangers were involved in a full-scale search for a Florida couple who became lost while hiking and survived three nights in the park's most rugged terrain.

"Our men and women in green and gray responded quickly to each emergency situation, applying their knowledge, training and skills with compassion and professionalism. I am very proud of the lifesaving efforts made by staff at both parks," said Susan Tillotson, chief of operations.

The situations show how very quickly a routine day in a state park can turn into a tense experience for park rangers.

On July 18 at Hanging Rock, Park Superintendent Erik Nygard was alerted by office assistant Amanda Wood that a juvenile had passed out in the office parking lot. Nygard rushed to the area and immediately began performing CPR on the young boy.

Ranger Matthew Haynes shortly arrived and continued CPR while Nygard performed chest compressions. More help arrived within a few minutes from Stokes Emergency Medical Services and the Danbury Volunteer Fire Department.

The youth was sent to Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem for treatment.

About 140 professional search-and-rescue personnel from 27 agencies across the state were involved in the three-day search at Stone Mountain July 21-24.

Craig Patterson 47, and his fiancé, Julia Martinez, 35, both of Miami, FL, were reported missing shortly before dark July 21 by Robert Patterson, Craig's father, who said the couple came to the park to hike from the family's summer home in nearby High Meadows.

Robert Patterson found the couple's vehicle, with a picnic lunch still inside, in the park after they failed to return to the vacation home late in the day.

Rangers immediately began searching trails near the Widow Creek Trailhead, searched through the night and by Saturday morning, had called for reinforcements from other state parks and area rescue squads.

About 9:15 a.m. on July 24, the couple emerged onto the Blue Ridge Parkway and flagged down a maintenance crew.

The pair was not injured despite having climbed more than 2,000 feet in elevation through steep, rocky terrain. The distance from the trailhead to the parkway is about six miles, but Park Superintendent Edward Farr said the couple obviously had wandered much farther.

Patterson and Martinez had survived by drinking water from creeks and branches in the area. They'd had a small tin of hard candy and drank water from the tin after the candy ran out.

They sought shelter from a thunderstorm the first night by sleeping in a small cave or rock overhang, and they spent the next two nights next to streams.

Craig Patterson said the couple followed the streams up the mountainside, often walking in the water to avoid heavy brush and were intent on finding a road.

Searches continued 24 hours a day with 30-50 searchers at a time sweeping areas of the park. Dog teams and a State Highway Patrol helicopter were used at various times during the search.

Farr said that most searches that find lost hikers still in good health end in the first 12-24 hours.

"They made good decisions while they were lost and that helped them stay healthy, I think," Farr said. "They took care of each other and, considering they spent three nights in the woods, they were not at all scared. They were in some of the most remote sections of the park that a lot of people never see."

John Patterson and his wife Helen praised state park employees and other rescue workers.

"We couldn't be happier with the media, the park rangers and the state," Helen Patterson told the Winston-Salem Journal. "I tell you, you just don't get that kind of care except in North Carolina, particularly with mountain people."

McBEAN GETS POST AT HAW RIVER

Sue McBean, a veteran park ranger at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area, has been promoted to superintendent of the new Haw River State Park, according to the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation.



A superintendent is the chief of operations and administration at a state park or state recreation area with wide-ranging responsibilities for staffing, training, law enforcement, visitor services, natural resource protection and environmental education.

"Haw River State Park is the site of our first residential environmental education center at The Summit, and our plans are to develop a traditional state park there as well," said Lewis Ledford, director of the division. "Sue's wide-ranging abilities as

an experienced ranger and as an outstanding environmental educator make her an excellent choice as the park's first superintendent."

Authorized by the N.C. General Assembly in 2003, Haw River State Park is being developed along the Guildford-Rockingham county line. The state parks system is seeking to acquire land to augment The Summit conference center, which was purchased in 2005 from the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, McBean graduated in 1987 from Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in natural resource management. She worked in seasonal positions for the U.S. Forest Service and for state parks systems in Ohio, South Dakota, Massachusetts, California, Colorado and Alaska before joining the North Carolina system in 1993 as a Park Ranger II at Jordan Lake. She

was promoted to a Park Ranger III position in 1995.

She is a certified environmental educator and has been lead interpretive and education ranger at Jordan Lake as well as a law enforcement instructor for the division.

As the first park superintendent at Haw River, McBean will be involved in hiring initial park staff, forming a citizens park advisory committee and developing management plans. She will begin her new duties July 24.

"I see Haw River State Park as having a bright and vibrant future, encompassing and enhancing resource protection, environmental education and staff development," McBean said.

"I'm honored to be given the opportunity to be involved in the early stages of a project with such great potential for the Division of Parks and Recreation as well as for the state."

WALLACE TO LEAD MAYO RIVER PARK

Adrienne Wallace, a senior ranger at Eno River State Park, has been promoted to superintendent of the new Mayo River State Park now under development in Rockingham County.



A superintendent is the chief of operations and administration at a state park or state recreation area with wide-ranging responsibilities for staffing, training, law enforcement, visitor services, natural resource protection

and environmental education.

"From the start, we've had strong support for the development of Mayo River State Park from the community," said Lewis Ledford, director of the division. "Adrienne's experience at Eno River, a park that is similar in style to Mayo River, along with her exceptional people skills, will allow us to further develop this close relationship with the community and create a great state park."

Authorized by the N.C. General Assembly in 2003, Mayo River State Park is now at about 1,700 acres and additional land is being considered for acquisition.

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund has set aside

\$1.6 million for design and development of infrastructure and interim facilities at the site of the Old Mayo Park just north of Mayodan. Construction is expected to begin later this year.

A native of Erin, TN, Wallace earned a bachelor's degree in parks, recreation and tourism management from North Carolina State University in 1998. While in college, she was a seasonal employee at Morrow Mountain State Park and a naturalist at Eno River State Park and at Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area in Kentucky.

She joined the permanent staff at Eno River as a

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WALLACE

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Park Ranger II in September 1998 and was promoted to Park Ranger III in 2004. She is a certified environmental educator and a law enforcement instructor for the state parks system.

As the first park superintendent at Mayo River, Wallace will be involved in hiring initial park staff, forming a citizens park advisory committee and developing management plans. She will establish a temporary park office in Madison.

"I'm excited to begin this new phase of my career at a park born as part of the New Parks for a New Century initiative," Wallace said. "I look forward to seeing Mayo River State Park play a role in fulfilling the mission of this division, and I'm proud to be a part of this experience."



HANGING ROCK CABIN PROJECT

Work is progressing quickly on construction of four new vacation cabins at Hanging Rock State Park. Each is similar in design to the six existing cabins and meets all requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act. The Parks and Recreation Authority approved an allocation of \$678,599 for the project in 2004. In addition, the existing cabins have undergone extensive renovation. The cabins can be rented for a week at a time in the summer and on weekends in the spring and fall and are extremely popular among visitors.

HOWES TO LEAD AUDUBON

Jonathan Howes of Chapel Hill has been named chairman of the board of trustees of Audubon North Carolina.

Howes is a former secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and in June was reappointed chairman of the Parks and Recreation Authority, governing body of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Audubon North Carolina, the state chapter of the National Audubon Society, is dedicated to natural conservation with more than 10,000 members and seven active chapters that work in local



communities to preserve bird and wildlife habitats.

The organization is a partner with the state parks system in the management of some conservation lands including Lea Island and Bullhead Mountain state natural areas, and has joined in research projects, training and promotion of state parks as Important Bird Areas.

Howes has years of conservation experience, which made him the perfect choice to lead the organization, said Chris Canfield, executive director of Audubon North Carolina.

"When you look up at the lineup of almost any board member, it would be hard to find anybody better than Howes," he said. "He has a long history of working in conservation and, particularly in our case, Audubon has a partnership with state parks to collaborate...and Howes' deep connection is a natural fit in continuing that partnership."

Canfield said Howes' political experience will be key in continuing to advance Audubon North Carolina's conservation agenda, and added that Howes "is clearly well-respected and well-liked among administrative and political staff across the state."

Currently, Howes serves as special assistant to the chancellor and as an adjunct professor at UNC at Chapel Hill. He is a former mayor of Chapel Hill.

ALWAYS WELCOME

IDEAS AND SUBMISSIONS
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PIO OFFICE.

Marshall Ellis, left, James Padgett and Emily Parish examine a plant during an inventory session on a tract that will become part of the new Hickory Nut Gorge State Park.



TAKING STOCK

INVENTORIES PART OF PARK PLANNING

There were the usual suspects to be rounded up. But often, there are also a few pleasant surprises.

Duly noted in damp, wrinkled notebooks were the dusky salamander, the Biltmore sage, the rare white irisette, the enormous, fire-scarred white oak that somehow dodged a trip to the sawmill.

A team of biologists from the state parks system and the N.C. Natural Heritage Program spent four days in June scouring tracts in the Hickory Nut Gorge area of Henderson and Rutherford counties that soon will likely compose a portion of a new state park there. Their mission was to inventory rare species and habitat in a region that's renowned for its



abundance of both.

"It's important, especially during the planning stage, to have a really good idea of the species that are here and where they're located," said Brian Strong, chief of the parks system's natural resources team.

The N.C. General Assembly authorized a state park in Hickory Nut Gorge in 2005, and land conservancies and the state's conservation trust funds have worked closely together to set aside land for the park including the locally famous "World's Edge" tract of nearly

1,600 acres south of the gorge and portions of Rumbling Bald Mountain which forms part of the gorge's northern boundary.

The gorge has been the subject of study for years by the N.C. Natural Heritage Program, which has logged an impressive list of rare and endangered species in the rugged terrain in past inventories. The Nature Conservancy has had a strong presence in the area for years and has eagerly opened its properties to Natural Heritage surveys.

Natural Heritage botanist James Padgett joined Strong, Marshall Ellis, Emily Parish and Ed Corey as they tramped some of the more remote parts of "World's Edge".

The inventories are important in several ways.

Initially, the data reveal which properties should be a priority for conservation, whether they eventually are within a state park or managed by another state agency or by a land conservancy.

For land that is being

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A dusky salamander is found under a rock on an old road.

INVENTORY

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acquired or considered for a state park or state natural area, an inventory is a critical planning tool. It would defeat the state's conservation efforts if high-traffic park facilities were placed in too close proximity to rare species or habitat. The inventories can prevent costly and irreversible mistakes and ensure that a master plan balances conservation and recreation successfully.

And, every inventory that's completed adds to the state's common fount of knowledge about rare species and can bring researchers closer to being able to predict where important species can be found.

Strong said, "We did a similar process at Gorges State Park in Transylvania County. We really did a good job of baseline surveys, so we really knew what were the optimal places to put the visitor center and to put roads."

Gorges was the last state park to open to the public (in 2001), and by that time, the state parks system had refined the process of using species inventories in its planning since the last round of active state park expansion in the 1970s.

The inventories done on the 7,000-acre Gorges property – both biological and geological – had a profound effect on how the park is to be developed and managed.

The team at Hickory Nut Gorge took a systematic look on the properties, concentrating on some areas not examined in past forays. On the first day, they scaled down the eastern escarpment of "World's Edge", including acreage swept by recent wild fires.



Parisher and Ed Corey wield camera and field notebooks.

"One of the things to look for is indicator plants on the high, dry ridges," said Marshall Ellis. They can sketch a history of the frequency and severity of fires, he said.

After surveying a high-elevation area of "World's Edge" in the area of Sugarloaf Mountain, the group visited a section of Rumbling Bald Mountain that has become a popular rock climbing venue.

Emily Parisher's specialty has been species that prefer cliff faces.

Natural resource inventories are a part of the process of creating a state park or state natural area that the public rarely sees, but nonetheless, they're a key ingredient. Their importance is part of the reason that the state parks system has increased its staff of natural resource specialists.



SCOUTING FOR WILDLIFE

Eagle Scout Cameron Yates collected almost \$2,000 in donations and built an overlook on the wildlife trail at Falls Lake State Recreation Area. The trail, which uses simple materials to attract wildlife, was constructed largely by scouts under the direction of Ranger Brian Bockhahn.

Crews connect bridge sections and ease the span across the Jacob Fork River at South Mountains State Park.



PARK STAFF TACKLES NEW BRIDGE

The staff at South Mountains State Park certainly saved some money and considerable time by replacing a bridge leading to High Shoals Falls, the park's most popular destination point, rather than waiting for a contractor to do the job.

But, it's likely they also saved park visitors the pain of some sprained muscles and broken bones.

"We've already had one rescue carryout as a result of people hopping rocks since that bridge has been out," said Park Superintendent Jonathan Griffith.

Despite numerous signs, barricades and ranger warnings, visitors have persisted in scrambling over boulders at the bridge site on the Jacob Fork River rather than take an alter-

nate trail to the falls, Griffith said. The alternate is longer by only three-tenths of a mile, but it is somewhat more strenuous.

"It was just taking too long, we felt we couldn't wait any longer," added Ranger Wade Stubbs.

Torrential rains from Hurricane Frances in September 2004 washed away four pedestrian

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The gap in the trail, left, tempted visitors to climb over boulders in the river. Above, maintenance mechanic Brad Davis hammers home a temporary support.



STATE NATURAL AREAS WIN APPROVAL

The N.C. General Assembly has authorized two new state natural areas that will be added to the state parks system.

Two rare and highly sensitive habitats will be represented by the Mountain Bog State Natural Area in Avery County and the Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area in Pender and Onslow counties.

The mountain bogs and the savanna are identified as important additions in the division's New Parks for a New Century initiative, which surveys all known significant sites in the state. Three state natural areas – on the Haw River in Chatham County, at Elk Knob in Watauga County and Beech Creek Bog in Avery County – have also been added to the system as a result of the initiative.

The State Parks Act directs the system to protect representative examples of North Carolina's natural resources.

The state now has 19 such natural areas, which differ from state parks in management style. Some recreational uses are not permitted in particularly sensitive natural areas and conservation is given a very high priority.

The Trust for Public Land is helping in negotiations for 102 acres of the Sugar Mountain

bog with a grant from the Natural Heritage Trust Fund. And, the division hopes to acquire about 100 acres of Pineola bog with help from The Nature Conservancy. Those will be managed as a group with the Beech Creek Bog.

Mountain bogs are wetlands that support a variety of rare and unique species, but which are highly vulnerable to development because they are level sites in the mountain terrain.

Rare species identified at the sites include the bog turtle, bog fern, cranberry, Gray's lily, large, purple-fringed orchid, purple-leaf willowherb, four-toed salamander and Baltimore checkerspot.

At Sandy Run, a Natural Heritage Trust Fund grant will help acquire 2,206 acres of savanna. The Nature Conservancy owns the site and will continue management under a memorandum of agreement.

Savannas are known for extraordinary plant diversity and high numbers of rare species, and Sandy Run is also strategically located as a military base buffer at the edge of Camp LeJeune.

Rare species at the site include Venus flytrap, golden sedge, red-cockaded woodpecker, Cooley's meadowrue, yellow fringeless orchid, Carolina goldenrod and rough-leaf loosestrife.

SOUTH MOUNTAINS

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bridges in that section of the park. The largest was a bridge along the Hemlock Trail near the park office, but the 30-foot-long bridge leading to the falls was the most heavily used.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) agreed to pay for 75 percent of the replacement costs. But the agency demanded that the replacements be designed by professional engineers.

(The original bridges as well as a complex network of wooden staircases and decking leading to the falls were originally built on site by park staff in the 1980s.)

The designers recommended a bridge built of four-by-fours with some steel reinforcement, which made the replacement somewhat larger and considerably heavier than the original. The maintenance crew along with seasonal employees built truss sections at a maintenance shop under the guidance of maintenance mechanic Brad Davis.

At one time or another, almost the entire park staff was involved in the project, Griffith said, with detailed paperwork to complete, materials to order, and a complex schedule to be arranged for materials and tools to be hauled to the site. The staff got some help with the manual labor from a BRIDGE inmate crew of the Department of Corrections.

Davis took the lead – but many contributed – to the puzzler of lifting the unwieldy bridge pieces into place.

The truss pieces were bolted together and then slowly guided across the span with the help of a manual winch.

The park listed about \$6,000 spent on materials. The design firm had estimated the total project cost would be \$50,000, so the savings to state and federal governments are considerable.

Construction is expected to begin this fall on replacement of the remaining three bridges with a total bid price of \$185,000.

HOLIDAY CROWD JAMS JORDAN LAKE

Near-record crowds swamped Jordan Lake State Recreation Area on July 4, creating parking and traffic tie-ups that tested the mettle of all available rangers and at least eight State Highway Patrol troopers.

Park and district officials said they will enlist the help of the patrol and the DOT in making plans to avoid similar problems at peak times on future holidays.

All the park's day use areas except one were at capacity by 11:30 a.m. and rangers stopped admitting vehicles at most sites. The biggest crush occurred at the popular Seaforth recreation site just off US 64.

After about 1 p.m., visitors began parking cars along US 64 – well beyond “No Parking” zones along the highway. They trekked about a mile to the park carrying toddlers, coolers, outdoor grills and food. Within about an hour, more than 200 parked vehicles lined the roadside.



By the afternoon of July Fourth, more than 200 vehicles lined the shoulders of US 64 outside the recreation area.

The park asked local broadcasters to alert people that the park was full, which apparently helped prevent an even worse traffic jam, rangers said.

State troopers ordered about 20 of the parked vehicles to be towed.

A similar, but smaller,

traffic hazard was reported at the Ebenezer Church recreation site.

Options that will be considered on future holidays include a more aggressive media campaign beforehand and traffic barrels that would obstruct the roadside.



SOUTH MOUNTAINS VISITOR CENTER

Construction is expected to be completed this fall on a \$2.6 million visitor center at South Mountains State Park in Burke County. It will house exhibits, a teaching auditorium, classrooms and administrative offices.

SOUTH MOUNTAINS PLANS HERBARIUM

By Kelly Hoover
Interpretive Specialist

If you have ever been on a wildflower hike at South Mountains State Park, you know about the amazing biodiversity the park has to offer. Nestled between the piedmont and the foothills, the park has some interesting features for such a southerly location.

It has once been stated that the park sits at intersecting biological crossroads. Natural communities within the park resemble what you'd normally find in the mountains more than the piedmont due to the dynamic topography.

In an effort to document the park's unusual natural heritage, Ranger Katharine McPhail-Scala has been collecting for the park's new herbarium, a formal collection of plant specimens mounted for preservation on acid-free paper.

The herbarium will likely be stored in the classroom of the park's new visitor center now under construction.

For background information, Mcphail-Scala met with the assistant curator of the UNC-Chapel Hill herbarium, Carol Ann McCormick. McCormick provided materials and equipment, and shared ideas on collecting techniques, organization, preserving and mounting techniques, and how to incorporate the herbarium into educational programs.

McPhail-Scala has begun collecting wildflowers first, with other vascular plants, fungi, etc. to follow.

Common species such as mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), and foam flower (*Ti-*



Roundleaf ragwort of the daisy family was found 100 yards from the campground.

arella cordifolia), as well as uncommon species, have been added to the herbarium, which already includes nearly four dozen species.

The herbarium will be a great asset for programming as well as the state parks system's natural resource inventory database.

LEGISLATURE DECLINES BOND REFERENDUM

The 2006 session of the N.C. General Assembly adjourned July 28 without approving a \$1 billion bond referendum for land conservation that had been pursued by the Land for Tomorrow Coalition.

However, the lawmakers did appoint a study commission to review state land acquisition needs and financing options.

Companion bills had been introduced on both sides of the legislature.

Support for the bond proposal had been the primary goal during the annual Land and Water Conservation Day at the legislature, sponsored by environmental groups.

The Land for Tomorrow Coalition is a consortium of environmental groups, health professionals, community groups and business groups. It maintains that the state's economic health, public health and quality of life are dependent on land conservation and the improvement in water quality that conservation brings.

Under the coalition's plan, the bonds, in increments of \$200 million over five years, would have been issued to buy land for parks, recreation facilities, legacy forests, working farms, game lands, river corridors and historic landmarks. Some funding would have also been set aside for a new Landing Jobs Initiative.

HAW RIVER TRAIL

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The Haw River corridor has been a popular recreation draw for canoeists, kayakers and hikers for more than 10 years with informal agreements among recreational users, landowners and local governments for access and use. Advocates of the trail asked the state trails program, administered by the Division of Parks and Recreation to help coordinate efforts to develop a more formally recognized trail.

That led to the memorandum of understanding that will work to build consensus for management, project priorities, increased funding opportunities, safety standards and infrastructure for a multi-use trail within a 1,000-foot-wide corridor.

"This effort dovetails nicely with our development by the state parks system of Haw River State park at the northern limit of the corridor and of the Lower Haw State Natural Area adjoining Jordan Lake," said Lewis Ledford, division director. "The shared vision of the Haw River as a recreation and

economic development treasure is an exciting one for both the state and our partners in these communities."

The local governments who have signed the agreement are the counties of Alamance, Guilford, Chatham, Orange and Rockingham, the City of Burlington, the City of Graham, the Town of Haw River and the Town of Swepsonville.

The Haw River's headwaters lie at the eastern edge of Forsyth County. The river then stretches 110 miles to join the Deep River in Chatham County to form the Cape Fear. In decades past, mills dotted the river's banks and it was locally infamous for carrying effluent from those mills.

Now, it is often a touted as a centerpiece for proposed housing developments serving the Triangle's booming population.

Haw River Trail supporters, who have been working

for more than two years to lay groundwork for the pact, say that the river can be much more than just a scenic backdrop for subdivisions.

They say the Haw River Trail can be a model of conservation and yet appeal to a variety of visitors, including ecotourists, history buffs lured by the mill culture and even wine lovers visiting the five wineries on or near the river.

"We're back to a point in time where the river is again a very vital part of the community," said Darrell McBane, chief of the state trails program. "This agreement will help ensure that access to the river for the community's citizens and their guests will be safe and worry-free."

Over the past few years, local governments have received \$178,000 from state grant programs toward acquiring additional public access sites, additional parking or



Attendees at the event look over a series of maps that outline the progress of trails and access points along the corridor.



paths at existing sites. There are currently 18 access sites along the river for paddlers, although many of them rely on informal agreements with landowners.

McBane said the memorandum of understanding could open the door to more grant prospects, particularly federal

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funding through the state trails grant program or state funding through DOT or the conservation trust funds.

Earlier this year, the Haw River corridor was selected as the preferred route for a central North Carolina segment of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Although it meanders somewhat from a direct route linking the Pilot Mountain-Hanging Rock area to Eno River and Falls Lake, it offers enough recreation opportunities and scenery to make it an attractive alternative.

Rep. Alice Bordsen of Mebane told the local government representatives at the ceremony that, with the interest of state government and the disappearance of industrial sites along the river, the time is right to build a positive popular image of the region.

"We have everything there," she said. "We have the will, we have the vision and we have good state policies. We have people working on the ground, and I'm just as proud of Alamance County and this region as I can be."

Ledford said that the state parks system is a natural partner for the effort. Besides offering conservation of natural resources, state parks are "economic engines" as well in the counties where they're located, he said.

Jordan Lake State Recreation Area in Chatham County is one of the most popular outdoor attractions in the state, recording more than 1.4 million visits in 2005.

Haw River State Park, at the border of Guilford and Rockingham counties, has



Rep. Alice Bordsen of Mebane told the group that, with fewer industrial sites along the river, the time is right to build a positive popular image of the region.

emerged as the state's first residential environmental education center since the acquisition a year ago of The Summit conference center.

Melody Wiggins, director of Graham's recreation and parks department, said that next year, the City of Burlington

expects to open a new river access, and within two years, grant projects already in the works could result in a 30-mile stretch offering worry-free access.

With the new agreement, that stretch of river could be extended to about 70 miles within 3-5 years, she said.

ACTION BY OFFICE ASSISTANT DRAWS THANKS FROM GOVERNOR

Governor Mike Easley sent a letter of commendation in June to Amanda Wood, an office assistant at Hanging Rock State Park, for selfless and quick-thinking action in a minor medical emergency.

Minta Elder and her husband Derek of Madison had been hiking in the park on an unusually hot day in early May when she began feeling faint due to low blood sugar. When Derek Elder came to the park office looking for some type of snack to offer his wife, Wood offered up her lunch. The Elders promptly sent a letter of

thanks to the governor's office.

Besides her curriculum in business administration and accounting at Rockingham Community College, Wood had taken courses in health occupation and had recognized the seriousness of the emergency.

"Your calm demeanor and quick response in getting food to Mrs. Minta is greatly appreciated by the Elders. I commend your selfless act," Easley wrote.

Wood, who had been working as a seasonal employee since August 2004, was offered and accepted a permanent position as office assistant June 16.

TRUST FUND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that won't get funded. Therefore, we advise those of you who don't get funding today to come back again. We recognize the local parks and recreation needs are there."

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is administered through the Division of Parks and Recreation and was established in 1994 when the General Assembly dedicated 75 percent of the state's share of the excise tax on real estate deed transfers to the fund.

The revenue is distributed to three programs: 65 percent to the state parks system for repairs, capital improvements and land acquisition; 30 percent for matching grants to local parks and recreation programs for development and land acquisition; and five percent to the coastal beach access program.

Since 1995, the Parks and Recreation Authority has considered 800 grant applications with requests totaling about \$148 million. The authority has awarded 487 grants for \$92.5 million.

In other business, the authority agreed to reallocate \$2.06 million in unspent money from previous years, remaining revenue from this fiscal year and unspent operating funds to land acquisition projects at Hickory Nut Gorge and Pettigrew state parks.

Lewis Ledford, director of the division, gave the authority an update on the recently completed legislative session and recent agency activities.

Ledford praised lawmakers for passing legislation creating Mountain Bog State Natural Area in Avery County



Lewis Ledford, center, division director, briefs members of the Parks and Recreation Authority at Jones Lake State Park about this year's legislative session.

and Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area in Onslow and Pender counties. He also said the authorizing legislation included a provision directing the division to study the suitability of the Cabin Lake area in Duplin County as a possible state park.

Earlier in the session, the General Assembly approved the state budget, which includes \$15 million for land acquisition at Hickory Nut Gorge State Park.

In the closing hours of the session, lawmakers passed legislation creating a 16-member study commission to review the state's land acquisition needs and the Land for Tomorrow Coalition's proposed \$1 billion bond referendum for open space protection, Ledford said. The commission's report is due in February.

The General Assembly also approved a state license tag commemorating state parks. As proposed, proceeds from the

sale of the special plate will be split evenly between the Parks and Recreation and Natural Heritage trust funds.

Ledford concluded by reassuring authority members that the division, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the State Property Office and local legislators – including Sen. Walter Dalton and Rep. Bob England – remain committed to pursuing the acquisition of Chimney Rock Park for the benefit and enjoyment of all North Carolinians.

"We fully appreciate and understand that this is one of the most scenic properties in the state and one of the most recognizable natural resources in the Southeast," he said.

In the afternoon session, Jones Lake Superintendent Shederick Mole gave authority members an informative and entertaining education program on the park's history, key features, habitats and prescribed burning program.

North Carolina State Parks

Monthly Attendance Report

June, 2006

PARK	JUNE 2006	TOTAL YTD JUNE 2006	JUNE 2005	TOTAL YTD JUNE 2005	% CHANGE (2005/2006)	
					JUN	YTD
Carolina Beach	28,714	115,828	26,040	121,628	10%	-5%
Cliffs of the Neuse	14,267	48,671	13,033	48,415	9%	1%
Crowder's Mountain	30,665	182,743	30,559	179,165	0%	2%
Eno River	29,169	152,515	33,663	164,575	-13%	-7%
Falls Lake	136,692	480,624	135,051	433,245	1%	11%
Fort Fisher	45,000	283,143	78,771	333,168	-43%	-15%
Fort Macon	171,878	589,676	172,330	574,136	0%	3%
Goose Creek	10,099	52,538	15,062	71,831	-33%	-27%
Gorges	18,256	40,655	18,911	54,279	-3%	-25%
Hammocks Beach	14,076	59,589	20,466	67,338	-31%	-12%
Hanging Rock	52,900	196,032	47,010	157,425	13%	25%
Jockey's Ridge	173,279	450,556	146,710	418,650	18%	8%
Jones Lake	9,264	35,180	10,422	40,419	-11%	-13%
Jordan Lake	174,615	466,594	259,994	784,227	-33%	-41%
Kerr Lake	170,128	522,804	258,524	846,272	-34%	-38%
Lake James	154,406	312,231	43,736	184,751	253%	69%
Lake Norman	55,017	244,152	55,854	233,274	-1%	5%
Lake Waccamaw	10,476	48,898	11,700	46,164	-10%	6%
Lumber River	7,435	36,995	7,015	28,846	6%	28%
Medoc Mountain	5,124	24,209	5,310	20,732	-4%	17%
Merchant's Millpond	19,785	93,047	26,060	113,184	-24%	-18%
Morrow Mountain	40,440	158,742	26,900	88,960	50%	78%
Mount Jefferson	9,128	32,092	9,256	33,684	-1%	-5%
Mount Mitchell	41,563	90,684	23,738	64,762	75%	40%
New River	37,860	111,434	21,929	55,760	73%	100%
Occonechee Mountain	4,333	29,173	5,008	26,613	-13%	10%
Pettigrew	8,448	36,762	9,762	37,593	-13%	-2%
Pilot Mountain	39,098	173,916	40,846	184,442	-4%	-6%
Raven Rock	7,584	49,741	9,223	56,501	-18%	-12%
Singletary Lake	4,512	18,066	7,728	21,240	-42%	-15%
South Mountains	24,110	102,482	20,980	105,460	15%	-3%
Stone Mountain	44,432	182,880	46,520	173,816	-4%	5%
Weymouth Woods	3,983	23,616	3,587	22,150	11%	7%
William B. Umstead	63,540	302,189	62,414	292,896	2%	3%
SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL	1,660,276	5,748,457	1,704,112	6,085,601	-3%	-6%



Our Mission Remains...

to protect North Carolina's **natural diversity**;
to provide and promote **outdoor recreation**
opportunities throughout North Carolina;
to exemplify and encourage **good stewardship**
of North Carolina's natural resources for all
citizens and visitors.

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SAFETY ZONE

Stay Alert About Fire Safety

- ✓ Keep up with smoke detector and fire extinguisher maintenance; test detectors and inspect extinguishers monthly and change batteries in detectors twice a year.
- ✓ Establish and practice a family fire escape plan at home.
- ✓ Always use extreme caution when using candles or any type of open flame.



The Steward

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